

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original) A process for producing a methyl methacrylate, the process comprising the steps of:
 - (i) decomposing methyl t-butyl ether to obtain an isobutylene and a methanol,
 - (ii) oxidizing the isobutylene to obtain at least one compound selected from a methacrylic acid and a methacrolein and
 - (iii) esterifying at least one compound selected from the methacrylic acid and the methacrolein with the methanol to produce a methyl methacrylate.
2. (original) The process according to claim 1, further comprising a step of separating the isobutylene from the decomposition reaction mixture prior to the oxidation step of the isobutylene.
3. (original) The process according to claim 2, further comprising a step of recovering a methanol from the remaining mixture obtained after the separation of the isobutylene, prior to the esterification step.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 10/087,858

4. (original) The process according to claim 3, wherein the recovered methanol has a 95% by weight or more of methanol based on the recovered methanol and contains at least one compound selected from t-butyl alcohol, water and methyl t-butyl ether.

5. (original) The process according to claim 3, further comprising a step of purifying the recovered methanol.

6. (original) The process according to claim 5, wherein the purified methanol contains about 95 % by weight or more of methanol based on the purified methanol.

7. (original) The process according to claim 5, wherein the purified methanol contains about 99 % by weight or more of methanol based on the purified methanol.

8. (original) The process according to claim 5, wherein the purified methanol contains about 99.9 % by weight or more of methanol based on the purified methanol.

9. (canceled)

10. (canceled)

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 10/087,858

11. (new) A process for producing methyl methacrylate, the process comprising the step of esterifying at least one compound selected from the group consisting of a methacrylic acid and a methacrolein with a methanol to produce methyl methacrylate, wherein said methanol is a methanol which is recovered from decomposition of a methyl t-butyl ether.

12. (new) The process according to claim 11, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 99 % by weight or more of methanol based on the recovered methanol.

13. (new) The process according to claim 12, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 99.9 % by weight or more of methanol based on the recovered methanol.

14. (new) The process according to claim 7, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 10 ppm by weight or less of t-butyl alcohol and/or about 10 ppm by weight or less of methyl t-butyl ether.

15. (new) The process according to claim 8, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 10 ppm by weight or less of t-butyl alcohol and/or about 10 ppm by weight or less of methyl t-butyl ether.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 10/087,858

16. (new) The process according to claim 11, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 10 ppm by weight or less of t-butyl alcohol and/or about 10 ppm by weight or less of methyl t-butyl ether.

17. (new) The process according to claim 12, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 10 ppm by weight or less of t-butyl alcohol and/or about 10 ppm by weight or less of methyl t-butyl ether.

18. (new) The process according to claim 13, wherein the recovered methanol contains about 10 ppm by weight or less of t-butyl alcohol and/or about 10 ppm by weight or less of methyl t-butyl ether.